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## **NEWS RELEASE**

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**September 12, 2002**

### **Border Patrol Arrests Nine Principals For Alien Smuggling**

TUCSON, AZ- Tucson Sector Border Patrol Agents have arrested nine principals involved with an alien smuggling ring in Tucson, Arizona. On Sept. 6, 2002, agents from the Tucson Border Patrol Station received a phone call from a man in Idaho saying that a friend of his was being held against his will in Tucson by an alien smuggler. A subsequent investigation of phone numbers and addresses led to a house located on the south side of Tucson. The Tucson Border Patrol Station Smuggling Disruption Team along with the Tucson Police Department proceeded to conduct a welfare check at the suspect address to determine the validity of the call.

The welfare check produced 42 subjects identified as illegal border crossers in the house. Subsequent investigations revealed that nine other subjects in the house were directly involved in the alien smuggling operation. These nine subjects included guides, drivers, money runners and the alleged smuggling organizational head. The alleged leader of the organization is a permanent legal resident and the other eight principals were identified as illegal entrants.

After an extensive investigative process involving the Tucson Police Department, Tucson Sector Intelligence Team, Tucson Sector Prosecution Unit, Tucson Station Smuggling Disruption Team and the U.S. Attorney's Office, alien smuggling charges have been filed against nine principals. Tucson Sector Border Patrol Chief David Aguilar said, "This typifies the callousness of the smuggler towards his human cargo. Thanks to the assistance of the Tucson Police Department, we were able to dismantle another human smuggling organization."

On September 7, 2002, Border Patrol Agents searched two other apartments located in Tucson. This search resulted in the discovery of over \$55,000.00 in U.S. currency, Mexican pesos valued at over \$5,600.00 U.S. currency, a .22 caliber rifle, a .32 caliber handgun and multiple smuggling ledgers. In addition, the U.S. Attorney's Office is pursuing the seizure and forfeiture of six vehicles that were directly tied to the alien smuggling operation.

**-- USBP --**

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**For more information, contact Tucson Sector Public Affairs Office at (520) 670-6871**